

**Testimony before House and Government Operations Committee
Support**

**HB 32 – Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Electronic Record
January 26, 2022**

Maryland’s Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW–MD), which represents professional social workers across the state, supports House Bill 32 – *Mental Health Law – Petitions for Emergency Evaluation – Electronic Record*. This bill allows a petition for emergency evaluation to be transmitted electronically.

NASW supports this bill because we must modernize our laws to reflect the increased use of technology in providing care. As the use of telehealth and licensure compacts continue to expand, more patients are receiving services from behavioral health providers who may not be local. These remote providers still need to have the ability to submit emergency petitions when their clients are in crisis, and this bill will ensure that is possible. Additionally, when a patient is in crisis, it is important that they are connected to emergency services as soon as possible. This bill will help limit any delays in the emergency petition process and help ensure smooth access to emergency care

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 32. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mary Beth DeMartino, LCSW-C, Executive Director, NASW MD (mdemartino.naswmd@socialworkers.org).